HISHIKAWA MORONOBU: FROM PAINTINGS TO PRINTS

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ABSTRACT: The first known ukiyo-e painter and print designer who produced images of the pleasure quarters, its courtesans and inhabitants was Hishikawa Moronobu, whose painting scroll *Yoshiwara Fûzoku Zuken*, as published in a Gotô Museum catalog, was analyzed in comparison to the album *Yoshiwara no tei*, dealing with the same subject, published in ink-line printing technique (*sumizuri-e*). Other visual sources from contemporary artists such as Sukenobu, who designed many types of courtesans, and some literary sources from Saikaku were also analyzed, as they enhance certain characteristics closely related to Moronobu, not only in subject matter but also in the creation of a new media. Scrolls were understood here also as literature, visual literature, in the way images were connected and on their narrative aspect. Changes of scenes, election of certain aspects, descriptions of inner and outer spaces, depiction of different characters of the "floating world" were analyzed as they were treated in both media, painting scroll and picture album.

RESUMO: O primeiro pintor e idealizador de gravuras *ukiyo-e* conhecido que produziu imagens dos bairros do prazer, suas cortesãs e habitantes foi Hishikawa Moronobu, cujo rolo de pintura *Yoshiwara Fûzoku Zuken*, publicado no catálogo do Museu Gotô, foi analisado em comparação com o álbum *Yoshiwara-no tei*, que versa sobre o mesmo tema, publicado na técnica de impressão linear (*sumizuri-e*). Outras fontes de artistas contemporâneos tais como Sukenobu, que idealizou muitos tipos de cortesãs e beldades em geral, e alguns enxertos literários extraídos de Saikaku também foram analisados, pois eles clarificam certas características intimamente relacionadas com Moronobu, não somente em seu aspecto temático mas também em sua criação de um novo meio pictórico. Os rolos foram interpretados aqui também como literatura, literatura visual, devido ao modo como as imagens se interligam e narram histórias. Mudanças de cenas, escolha de certos aspectos, descrições de espaços externos e internos, representação de personagens variados do "mundo flutuante" foram analisados segundo seu tratamento nos dois meios, rolo de pintura e álbum de xilogravuras.

KEYWORDS: Japanese Painting, Japanese Prints, Yoshiwara, Edo period, visual analysis, *ukiyo-e*, *ukiyo-zôshi*

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Pintura japonesa, gravura japonesa, Yoshiwara, Período Edo, análise visual, *ukiyo-e*, *ukiyo-zôshi*

Hishikawa Moronobu: from painting to prints

Hishikawa Moronobu (ca. 1618-1694) was primarily a painter belonging to the *machi-eshi*[1] group amidst the inhabitants of the newly established city of Edo and was the first to sign prints dealing with contemporary themes of the townsmen lives and culture. Having produced more than one hundred and fifty illustrated books and albums, his subjects were actors and courtesans critiques, Yoshiwara beauties, costumes-and-manners scenes and fashion of the commoners, some classical poetry and guide books, counting also a large part of erotica. His first books follow a pattern where the upper parts of the pages are filled with text, but roughly in 1681 only a quarter part of the upper part contains texts and the images gain prominence, creating the album format (normally twelve big prints bound together in one common subject) and the single-sheet print.

The prints I intend to analyze in this paper belong to the album format and have no text at all, with the exception of only some words indicating the identity of the characters and the depicted places. The album *Yoshiwara no tei*[2] was published in 1678 by Yamagata-ya, but was not the first work on the subject by Moronobu. In 1675 there was *Yoshiwara Daizassho* (Yoshiwara's General Book); in 1677 Yoshiwara was also depicted in *Edo Suzume* (Edo Guide); also in 1678 there was *Yoshiwara Koi no Michibiki* (Love Guide in Yoshiwara) and in 1682-3 he was going to produce *Imayô Yoshiwara Makura* (Nowadays Yoshiwara Pillow). After this date, Yoshiwara as a special place does not appear any longer in his books or albums titles, although the subject of courtesans and their pleasure quarters continued to be depicted, in a more intimate and straightforward way, instead of an outsider point of view: we can say that descriptions of "how to get there" gave place to representations of *yûjo*[3], their clients and their world, in a metonymical way. *Recent Yoshiwara Pillow*, for example, depicts eighteen couples enticing into love games and the surroundings are only scarcely commented upon, with the exception of some secondary people and a little furniture, a garden of course, lots of Chinese-style ink-painted *byôbu* and food.

In Moronobu's paintings too, Yoshiwara was not to be depicted only once. The handscroll I intend to analyze in this paper was published in a Gotô Museum catalogue, relating to a 1975 exhibition called *Genroku no Ukiyo-e*, centered in the works of Matabei,

1. "Town Painter", a new category of painters, not directly affiliated to a certain master.
2. Album em format *ôban* (big print, 27.5 x 41cm), printed in the technique called *sumizuri-e* (ink-line prints).
3. As the word courtesan does not, in reality, translate the broader sense of what a *yûjo* was, it seems to be more appropriate to refer to them by their Japanese name. *Yûjo*, "play-women", "entertainment-women", in fact, were classified in ranks according to their talents, beauty and charms.

Moronobu and Hanabusa Itchô and bears the title *Yoshiwara Fûzoku Zuken* (Yoshiwara's Manners-and-costumes Scroll).

Although not telling a story using words, the handscroll format is very appropriate to tell stories, visual literature as it always was[4], by the way images are connected, by the rhythm of different point-of-view depiction, and by the passage of time both as treated by the artist in the scroll itself and by the audience when actually handling it: one scene can become part of another one depending on how to open it. It is also important to stress that tradition played a great role in establishing its language and conventions, which means that it is a more conservative medium. With the album format – which is absolutely a new medium at Moronobu's time –, the connection of time and change of scenario is more subtle, since each sheet depicts one entire scene: the viewers have to work more their imagination to connect them. On the other hand, from albums to single sheet prints there was only a small step, and Moronobu was the first artist to use the woodcut medium to produce single sheet prints, more affordable to the general public[5].

Yoshiwara is the subject, but both painting and album dedicate three entire scenes depicting how to get there, stressing the fact that the pleasure quarter was located near Asakusa Temple, in the southeast direction, far from the main city of Edo centered in the Edo Castle, since we can notice a more agricultural environment with humble houses, many cultivated fields and people who look like prepared for a long journey. Metaphorically, too, it can indicate that a visit to Yoshiwara was not a simple one, which could be easily performed. As we can read in other sources[6] dealing with the pleasure quarters, sometimes the preparation for a visit could take up to six months. The delay in showing us Yoshiwara, also called *betsu sekai* (a separate world), could also mean a stress on a rite of passage: the geographical passage from the normal world, from where samurai, priests and servants could transit freely (providing that they were in their proper place and behaved properly), but a courtesan could not, towards the "bad world" where all the social conventions were upside down and the rules were very different from the shogunate-ruled stratified four-classes-system. Moronobu presents us immediately to Yoshiwara's habitués: samurais, young and older, of middle and high rank, with their servants, some priests, some peddlers. So we are told that, at the time, pleasure quarters main clients were samurai.

In the handscroll, after the samurai arrive at Nihon Dzutsumi and enter the Great Gate (Ômon-guchi), we are introduced to Yoshiwara's world: the scenes show the main streets filled with customers, like Sumichô Avenue, Edo-chô Nichô-me, Kyômachi Street, with various types of *yûjo*, servants who walk in various directions and establishments along the streets: various types of tea houses, money exchange houses, assignation houses,

4. Notably produced during eleventh to fourteenth centuries, painting scrolls were initially related to literature, such as in *Genji Monogatari Emaki, Ise Monogatari Emaki* and *Murasaki Shikibu Nikki Emaki*; related to religion, such as in *Shigisan Engi Emaki, Kita no Tenjin Emaki, Ippen Hijiri-e* or related to military wars such as in *Heiji Monogatari Emaki*. Although having progressively lost their texts, their origins were decisive in characterizing them as a narrative medium *par excellence*.
5. It is difficult to evaluate if the demand for the sort of images Moronobu was producing was decisive for his woodcut medium choice, but a whole handprinted industry developed during Edo period.
6. Like in the researches of Seigle, Ôno Tadashi, Longstreet and very often in Saikaku's writings.

brothels interiors, one or two floors brothels along with the activities performed in that special world. The "window shopping" aspect of the disguised customers examining the commodities-*yûjo* displayed is treated with great care and detail. By these scenes we are told that there are different sorts of establishments and different sorts of courtesans: *yûjo* sancha sitting in tatami playing shamisen, *yûjo* playing go, dancing, reading books, pouring tea, a procession of *yûjo* in the streets (*tayû* followed by *kôshi*, *kamuro* and male servants), watching and being watched by the customers, mainly samurai as pointed before. It is interesting to notice that all samurai wear two swords, whereas their servants bear only one, habit to be completely banned from the pleasure quarters later by shogunal edit[7]. If the main customers here depicted are samurai, we have to remember that pleasure quarters were created by the merchant class with shogunal approval; later on, with townsmen economical prominence the townsmen themselves are going to be the main customers, for rich houses despair, as we can so often read in Saikaku's novels. At Moronobu's time, though, there is no room for them – we have to wait until Chikamatsu's. We can notice that, among other sumptuary regulations, the Kyôhô, Kansei and Tenpô reforms[8] aimed the samurai to return to a life of frugality, meaning that in fact they were spending much of their income in these sort of "evil activities" run by the merchants.

If both painting and scroll maintained the three scenes dealing with "how to get there" the ten scenes of street-and-interiors were abbreviated in the album to only three essential scenes: the entrance, courtesans playing shamisen displayed in a large room, the process of examining-selecting-classifying-choosing one of them, and a courtesan procession on the street. This activity, courtesan procession (*oiran dôchû*), was portrayed over and over again in the Japanese woodcut prints, and we know that by 1690s the ritual took already two hours from the assignation house to the high courtesan's rooms[9]. The aspect of idling, wandering through the streets, the curiosity in looking at many different types and ranks and their activities, the establishments they belong to, is somehow lost in the album, where no courtesan is shown reading, there is no mention of a money exchange house, there are fewer working people in the streets and inside the buildings. The album reduced the streets-and-interiors sequence to their main interest *i.e.* the activity between customers and courtesans, losing much of its thematic richness. One could argue that in visual terms there was loss also, as we can not see any more subtle hues of grays and colors and different line contours in the prints. If that is anyhow true, it is outstanding though that the prints have one absolutely new quality: boldness – and is there something that translates more the *hari* (Edo *yûjo*'s charm) and the *aragoto* (Edo kabuki's rough style) than the first bold black-and-white Moronobu's prints?[10]

After the depiction of the various establishments and their courtesans, we finally see some customers actually enjoying themselves in the various rooms, being served and entertained. The fourteenth scene of the scroll shows a clear cut roof separating the

7. All samurai were obliged to leave their swords in the entrance gate, making it easier for the shogunate to control those "outlaws" who intended to look for refuge in the brothels.
8. All aimed ultimately to impose discipline upon "soldiers-without-a-war"
9. As minutely described in Seigle's research.
10. In opposition to the Kansai region, where dominates *sui* or *iki* (charm, elegance and connosseurship) and *wagoto* (soft Japanese style) in Ôsaka kabuki.

whole page from top to bottom in a perpendicular line, indicating another level of description: we enter in the *ageya-machi*[11]. In the prints it is missing the tea house where samurai and other customers change clothes, as well as a number of servants who would be in charge of carrying their belongings. Missing also are scenes of the first meetings in the houses of assignation. In the printed album, the entertainment in the brothels is shown directly, with much less details about the steps to be taken to succeed in the pleasure quarters: the goal of relating to a courtesan is easily attained in a few steps.

It is worthwhile to notice that, before describing more the "ambiance" of the various small rooms and the activities performed inside their quarters, Moronobu shows the kitchen in a detailed way: the plates to be served in a sophisticated catering, the preparation of silky wonderfully designed bed garments, the servants rushing up and down with trays of always fresh and hot food. Although the kitchen scene is presented also in the album in a more abbreviate form, it still shows the importance of good food and its special presentation, with emphasis in the way fishes and sea food are cleaned, cut and arranged. All the cooks are men but the servants are mainly women, with a few male youngsters.

The transition from the kitchen scenes to the entertainment rooms echoes in shape (a staircase that crosses the paper perpendicularly from bottom to top) the entrance in the house of assignation, in the painting. Needless to say, in the prints such transitional device is not necessary.

Inside the *zashiki* (guest-room) we see not only courtesans but also men playing the shamisen, the musical instrument *par excellence* of the pleasure quarters, being followed by the *taiko-mochi*[12] *Geisha*, specialized in playing and dancing, are not yet to be found in Moronobu's time. The depiction of a monk among the customers is present both in the painting and in the album, showing that they also were customers of the "bad places". In the scroll small, medium and large rooms and verandahs are showed in more detail than in the printed album, tendency of abbreviation that we pointed out before. Parts of people groups were chosen to compose a different space in the print: the *doku* or *hitori* (solitude, loneliness) screen, which is showed in the owner's room in the painting – who is, indeed, seated down alone, two servants reporting their business, another serving some food, everybody very respectful towards him – was settled in the *tokonoma* of the major large room in the print – where there is music (two shamisen players, one *taiko mochi*), a dancer, food, five servants, a priest, two clients and the courtesan in a merry-making occasion. Did Moronobu intend to tell us that lonely is the way of the world, not only for the owner of that house, but that the ghost and shadow of loneliness is there also within the guests, the entertainers and the servants? It is indeed interesting that Moronobu added that nuance of *miyabi*, the "beauty-with-and-within-sadness" ideal of an earlier time[13]

11. *Ageya-machi*: house of assignation.
12. *Taiko-mochi*, drum player.
13. It is, indeed, very *apropos* that Moronobu called himself Yamoto-eshi, Japanese painter, as we can relate him to the earlier Heian Period, aristocratic pretensions replaced by townsmen ideals.

We could interpret, on the other hand, that abbreviation can tell us much more than meaning impoverishment in the passage from painting to prints; actually we can say that only the essential aspects of the depicted world were portrayed in the prints: the stress in the "how to get there" phase make us sense certain echoes of the *tabi* theme (travel) and is metaphorical associations, and also a pretext to show a *meisho* (famous view); the guests in the main room relate to the Chinese four-entertainment theme (music, poetry, dance, go game); the general idea aims to tell us about their "present time" their Edo period *fûzoku-ga* (manners-and-costumes).

If we analyze the paintings shown in the painted scroll, it is worthwhile to notice, alongside with one small room decorated with Yamato-style "flowers-and-grass" screen, another big "Chinese-style" room where two screens are painted in sumi ink depicting seasonal "birds-and-flowers" and "mountains-and-rivers" views. The verandah opens to a garden painted in Chinese style. The scenario shows us Moronobu's own apprenticeship in the Tosa style and also the brothel's owners indulgence to the samurai class who is known to patronize ink painting. It surely proves that Moronobu was very well acquainted with both modes of painting and that he was aware of being, as he himself proclaimed, a "Yamato artist" of his present time.

The rooms which depict bed situations are separated only by screens and a number of servants, male and female, assist the couples of customers and courtesans. There is no such thing as the concept of privacy, and the scenes – not erotic in these two works – are going to be depicted almost always, in a number of other painters and print designers later works, as a kind of "public" space, where servants, other courtesans or musicians have free transit while the main couple entertain themselves. The voyeuristic prints of Harunobu have here their source – or maybe he only pointed out one already ever-existing situation. In fact, a large part of erotic prints play with voyeurism and/or comments on the depicted situation.

The last scene in the scroll shows the most intimate hour for the courtesans, when they can, finally, eat, frugally, quickly and with no pleasure, as if the activity did not belong to them. Needless to say, they are not alone. Their owners stand by their side, talking business. Although food is fundamental, cherished to the extreme, as we pointed out before, courtesans could not eat in public. We are going to see courtesans reading, playing, dancing, writing, taking baths, arranging their hair, getting dressed, but not eating, as if this activity were too earthy and rude for them.

Although all clothes in the painting are depicted in much more varieties of patterns and richer colors, as a whole they are quite similarly treated in the prints. We can notice that in the end of the seventeenth century, courtesans did not wear layers and layers of kimono (three was the normal combination), and their hair style was quite plain, whether straight down with one or two ornamental ribbons or tied in the Shimada style. There were no elegant long-sleeves *furi-sode* kimono, and the *tayû* and *kamuro* did not wear the same pattern in their kimonos in the processions, as we will see in later prints, such as in Masanobu, Kiyonaga and Utamaro's prints. We can notice, then, that the hierarchical system in the courtesan's world was not yet defined as it is going to be later. In other words, although the hierarchy is established already, the nuances between them and the formal attires were not so rich in the beginning.

It is in the men's world that we are going to notice more hierarchical types of clothing, though. The first big gap can be noticed in the way bare foot counterpoints *tabi* or *zôri*[14]: the lower category the servants are, the less clothing they wear. Among the upper class who wear kimono, there are those who wear formal *haori* and *hakama*, plain or painted kimono, straw hats or fans to disguise their identities, one or two swords. The more layers of kimono the upper class they are.

It is really worth to point out that whether samurai or townsmen, their hair style follows their identification not through social class but through age: the adult *yarô* (all shaved top), the youngster *wakashu* who had not had his adulthood initiation cerimony (partially shaved top) and the monks, who had their head entirely shaved. In the first scene of the painting we notice a samurai and a monk followed by gaily dressed *wakashu*, the first couple walking towards Yoshiwara, the latter leaving it. As we read in Saikaku's *Nanshoku Ôkagami* (The Big Mirror of Male Love, or Comrade Loves of the Samurai), male love normally related an older samurai or monk to a *wakashu*. Inside the pleasure quarters depicted in the scroll the youngsters performed no other function than serving dishes or tea, but outside we can see one samurai holding a *wakashu*'s hands in Sumichô Street, being closely watched by a young courtesan. The reference to male love in these two works by Moronobu is subtle, but if we look at some of his other works and if we relate them to Saikaku's writings, we can infer that indeed Moronobu was aware of it and of the fact that the same customers used to entertain themselves in the kabuki and in the pleasure quarters, being acquainted with both male and female ways of love.

In chapter 9 from Saikaku's *Comrade Loves of the Samurai* we are told the story of a *onna-gata*[15] called Sennojo who "had made his first appearance on the stage at the age of fourteen, and at forty-two years of age was still so popular that people loved to see him portray feminine characters"[16]. In the blurring of gender that we can notice in many ukiyo-e artists, especially in Harunobu's youngsters and beauties, these young actors look like the young courtesans in many aspects: both belong to a separate world (*betsu-sekai*), both work in a bad place (*aku-basho*), both are skillful in singing, dancing and entertaining, both are handsome and young; if they were still appreciated after their prime it was due to their high level technical skill.

Also, the description of the various phases that a customer had to go through to win a high class courtesan (poetry is inferred from sheets of paper being sold in a small shop at the entrance of the pleasure quarter) tells us that the scroll and the album are one kind of guide book, showing how laws on behavior and appropriateness ruled the lives of the society as a whole. Again, Saikaku's *Kôshoku Ichidai Otoko* (The Amorous Life of a Man) clarifies all those steps.

We are told about the highest *yûjo* in activity in Kyôto's Shimabara, Ôsaka's Shinbashi, Edo's Yoshiwara as well as in less glamorous places like assignation houses of the village of Matsumoto, inns in various places like Omi, Ejiri (Suruga Province), Southern Kyûshû, and teahouses in Honjo, Meguro, Shinagawa, Koishikawa, Shitaya,

14. *Tabi*: Japanese digitated socks; *zôri*: Japanese sandals.
15. Female-character-actor; generally a youngster, trained since childhood.
16. *In* Saikaku's *Comrade Loves of the Samurai*, p. 64.

Itabashi. Yonosuke, the main character, was the son of a Shimabara *yûjo* and a gold mine owner millionaire (who paid for her contract and married her), and spends all his life seeking for pleasure throughout the land of Japan. At nineteen, being an unregenerate playboy he was disowned but that was an excuse to show him in the "'ascetic life of monks", living afterwards with three "itinerant peddlers of perfumes"[17] and in various unstable situations in affordable places.

Yonosuke never stopped his way and a variety of cheaper options are shown, with less cultivated ladies, until eventually he inherited his family's fortune and "for 27 years, with his patrimony, [...] he had ceaselessly devoted his mind and body to adventures among the gay quarters of the country"[18]. Yonosuke is our guide for all-Japan gay establishments and the various procedures to win differently valued commodities-*yûjo*'s favors – to deceive, to use and abuse and finally to abandon them. As objectively as in Moronobu scroll, the establishments are shown by what they are and how they function and not, as it is going to be the case with most *ninjô*[19] kabuki and jôruri dramas by Chikamatsu, by the *yûjo*'s hearts and feeling.

As the subject itself of the pleasure quarters tells us about the rise of a new townsmen culture, in the technical approach it is in the transition from painting to the new media of the woodblock technique that we find its equivalence. Needless to say, as a reproductive media, prints are more available to a larger audience than paintings. The bird's eye view was used in both painting and print, but because the prints depict only one specific scene, the passage from interior to exterior with roofs removal is not so perceptible and rich as in the painting. Changes of point of view, also, very attractive device which gives rhythm to the composition, are less noticeable in the prints. The smoothness of the horizontal scroll favored depiction of various tea houses along the streets, in a single long composition, which seems to be esthetically pleasant to the audience, as we can see by the later development of series of prints, is lost in the album format.

Moronobu's use of color is very interesting; dark, saturated mineral green and pure vermilion are going to be the most privileged ones, that will attract our eyes throughout the scroll: with the exception of some pine trees, green and red are going to be the colors of the *zashiki*, courtesans and samurais kimonos, lacquer trays and bookcovers. Light, brownish, yellowish yamato-e-like colors are going to be used in the background as a whole and in the secondary characters.

Above all, the lack of color in the first ink-line prints must have been felt by the audience, because of the use of hand-coloring process and the later development of color woodblock. In the prints, contours alone are going to be essential, with some small black areas left uncut, in garments, hair, some objects. But always black contours, whereas in the painting the lines were delineated in a variety of colors, brownish, green or blue to pale beige. In later picture-books and albums, Moronobu's prints are going to

17. A euphemism for selling sexual favors, they were young and handsome youngsters.
18. *In* Saikaku's *The Life of an Amorous Man*, p. 229.
19. *Ninjô*: human feelings; sympathy; tenderness. The plays explored the feelings of impossible loves due to social restraints, often between a courtesan and a married man, which usually ended up in double-suicide in a highly emotional pitched drama which were so characteristic of Chikamatsu's works.

be cut in a more varied kind of lines and more bold black areas, which are going to suffice the lack of coloring and to enrich his prints, turning them from reproductions of paintings to real prints.

But the depiction of the faces both in painting and prints shows us that there was no concern or attention to individual characters; what we see here are types: men, women, children, young or old, are distinguished by their garments, hair style and activities. There is hardly any judgmental attitude towards feelings or psychological states other that the bowing of a servant towards a samurai, the vigorous acts of men cleaning fish, cutting their flesh, serving food, walking idly, playing music, singing, dancing, looking at the courtesans hiding their mouths – in short, the activities performed by the pleasure quarters world inhabitants. In that sense, the same can be said about Saikaku's characters: they are human types, drawn in broad general lines, struggling in their contemporary world full of sumptuary regulations, appropriate behaviors and a predetermined destiny by birth. In the same way Saikaku used traditional literary images and techniques to build his contemporary world, Moronobu used the bird's eye view perspective, the depiction of types, the use of clouds to change space, devices already known. What they did that was most important in the expression of a new culture was the use of the woodblock medium and both artists worked for publishing houses (Saikaku himself illustrated the first edition of *The Life of an Amorous Man*). Their main subjects were related to the new urban entertainment places and they did not avoid looking at that low society's lowest levels.

We had been comparing Moronobu, who worked his prolific years in Edo, to Saikaku, who was an Ôsaka writer, without considering any differences between these two cities or areas[20], but as we can read spread out in many of Saikaku's volumes, there were many differences already in the seventeenth century. If we compare Moronobu's courtesans to Sukenobu's, we might be able to read visual differences, that confirm many cultural facts. It is known that it was created in Edo the rough stuff (*aragoto*) of acting in Kabuki theater, whereas the soft stuff (*wagoto*) was characteristic of Kyôto-Ôsaka. That means that Moronobu's women are straightforward, direct, somehow rude as the kabuki *aragoto* style, whereas Sukenobu's women, by their delicacy of gesture, diversity of hair style and ornaments, by the rich designs in their kimonos and the ritual hierarchy of their processions, belong to the Japanese-like, soft, round, feminine *wagoto* style.

Nishikawa Sukenobu (1671-1751) was born in Kyôto and like Moronobu himself, studied under Tosa and Kanô[21] ways of painting, having also illustrated more than a hundred picture-books (*ehon*) for the Hachimonji-ya publishing house. Active mainly in the first half of the eighteenth century, Sukenobu worked along with the same subjects as did Moronobu, and his contribution, other than the Kyôto-like depiction of women, was that the opened the subject women-of-the-pleasure-quarters to women-of-all-social-

20. Edo, of the Kantô area and Ôsaka-Kyôto, of the Kansai or Kamigata area.

21. Although they seem to be opposite pictorial families, the Tosa being more related to the traditional Yamato-e and Kanô introducing new influences from the continent, for the ukiyo-e artists, the majority of them *machi-eshi*, "painters-of-the-cities", it was allowed certain freedom as they were not directly related to any of the families.

classes[22]. After his work, it was possible the existence of artists such as Ishikawa Toyonobu and Suzuki Harunobu who could explore the beauties theme (*bijin*) without necessarily relating them to the pleasure quarters.

His picture-book *Hyaku-nin Jorô Shina-sadame* (2 vols., 1723) was designed forty-five years after Moronobu's album we have been analyzing and the first big noticeable difference is that the surroundings are not depicted any more in details: indications of a tatami and a screen tell us metonymically that we are inside the courtesan's *zashiki*. The shift from environment to the actual characters performing their activities focuses our attention not anymore in a sort of guide-book approach, which was Moronobu's goal, but in the apprehension of human different types and their activities. That is indeed so much true that Sukenobu's women are depicted in small groups of five the most and in full size, occupying generous proportions of the composition, while in Moronobu's works each scene could contain twenty or thirty tiny figures compressed in-and-out the architectural surroundings.

Having became the main subject, there was more room to detail the figures and Sukenobu's draftsmanship in the depiction of kimono patterns, facial expression, gesture and movement turned his women figures into symbols of Kyôto's charm and sophistication. We notice also that by his time, other types of *yûjo* had arisen, and consequently more hair binding styles to differentiate them, as we can see in the illustrations showing dancing *maiko* in long-sleeves kimonos, who are going to be the most characteristic Kyôto *geisha* apprentices.

Conclusion

In verifying Moronobu's painting and album on the same subject, we noticed that the translation from painting to woodblock technique was attained mainly by the use of lines and some small areas of uncut-bold-black, spread out following the composition necessity of balance and weight. The narrative quality of a handscroll, with the possibility of unifying a number of scenes in a dynamic way, where the changes of spaces are deliberately drawn in subtle passages or brusque interruptions, as we have pointed out before, is a most appropriate media for a guide-book, whereas the album format, lacking this movement in the composition, gives us a highly centered composition of scenes. In later book illustration it is going to be created new devices to minimize this weakness, mainly by playing with page breaks.

The abbreviation of characters, establishments decoration, and whole scenes in the prints tells us not only about technical adaptations but also about an audience interested in the main activities performed in the pleasure quarters; nevertheless, for those who could afford an original painting, more information was given. The invention of the full color "brocade" prints responds to luxury demand from the audience and their economical growth.

22. And in doing so he was banned during the Kaihô Reform, by impropriety, as empresses and court ladies were included in the same book. In "The Politics of Japanese Prints", Sarah E. Thompson.

The fact that the background is described in details in Moronobu's works we analyzed shows that at his time there was an eagerness to know about the whole situation (how to get there, how to dress, where to exchange money, where the house of assignation was, the kinds of services provided, the types of available food and courtesans) of a visit to Yoshiwara, whereas some fifty years later, as we can notice in Sukenobu's prints, there was no more need for it, the focus being concentrated in the various types of women, extrapolating the pleasure quarters.

That we can find many humble working people both in Moronobu and Sukenobu works shows us also their attention to the manners-and-costumes of their contemporary world and enriches our understanding of the time. The same did Saikaku in some of his writings dealing with clerks, various small merchants and servants struggling to make their living and trying to escape from debtors in *Seken Mune San'yô* (Worldly Calculations). It seems then that in between the big main themes – courtesans, pleasure quarters, kabuki theater – we have glimpses of characters from the real life, in the minor figures of servants, workers, cooks, peddlers, brothel's owners, or other major figures as samurai, their servants and *daimyô*, all of them inhabitants of the urbes, which were growing in number more and more since seventeenth century Japan. The new media of woodblock printed books and prints tells us also about the spread of the information and the rise of the new business activity of publishing houses and its consequent spread of audience.

The townsmen culture defined itself not only in its subjects but also in its media.

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